News



The archbishop of Miami, Thomas Wenski, raises his hand while addressing a crowd during a panel on immigration at Georgetown University in Washington, Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025. (AP/Luis Andres Henao,File)

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Florida's Catholic bishops appealed to President Donald Trump on Monday to pause immigration enforcement activities during the Christmas holidays. The White House, in response, said it would be business as usual.

The appeal was issued by Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski, and signed by seven other members of the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The border has been secured. The initial work of identifying and removing dangerous criminals has been accomplished to a great degree," Wenski wrote. "At this point, the maximum enforcement approach of treating irregular immigrants en masse means that now many of these arrest operations inevitably sweep up numbers of people who are not criminals but just here to work."

"A climate of fear and anxiety is infecting not only the irregular migrant but also family members and neighbors who are legally in the country," Wenski added.

"Since these effects are part of enforcement operations, we request that the government pause apprehension and round-up activities during the Christmas season. Such a pause would show a decent regard for the humanity of these families."

Responding via email, White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson did not mention the holiday season in her two-sentence reply.

"President Trump was elected based on his promise to the American people to deport criminal illegal aliens. And he's keeping that promise," Jackson wrote.

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Wenski has established a reputation as an outspoken advocate of humane treatment for migrants. In September, for example, he joined other Catholic leaders on a panel at Georgetown University decrying the Trump administration's hardline policies for tearing apart families, inciting fear and upending church life.

Wenski highlighted the contributions of immigrants to the country's economy.

"If you ask people in agriculture, you ask in the service industry, you ask people in health care, you ask the people in the construction field, and they'll tell you that some of their best workers are immigrants," said Wenski. "Enforcement is always going to be part of any immigration policy, but we have to rationalize it and humanize it."

Wenski joined the "Knights on Bikes" ministry, an initiative led by the Knights of Columbus that draws attention to the spiritual needs of people held at immigration detention centers, including the one in the Florida Everglades dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz." He recalled praying a rosary with the bikers in the scorching heat outside its walls. Days later, he got permission to celebrate Mass inside the facility.

"The fact that we invite these detainees to pray, even in this very dehumanizing situation, is a way of emphasizing and invoking their dignity," he said.

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.